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James A. Garfield.

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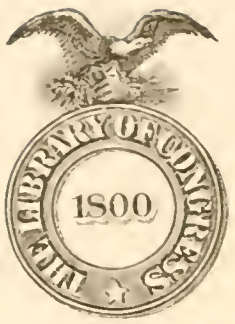

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ADDRESS

AT THE

MITHRAS LODGE OF SORROW,

WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 10, 1881,

IN MEMORY OF

JAMES A. GARFIELD,

BY THE

Hon. GEO. B. LORING,

ADDRESS.

BRETHREN:

We are assembled here to pay an affectionate tribute to the memory of one of the most illustrious of our order, whose career as citizen, soldier, legislator, magistrate, will always be revered and cherished wherever the hearts of men are bound together in this holy brotherhood, and so long as truth, "unchangeable and everlasting," shall endure. While to all the world he now stands as a type of heroism, fortitude, Christian devotion, patriotism, and civil wisdom and justice, to us he belongs to that immortal group who stepped forth to their great labors strengthened by the lessons of the lodge—Washington, Warren, Lafayette, Lee, Putman, Steuben, Caswell and Sullivan, whose powers on the field and in council gave us our freedom and the Republic, and whose greatness found its secure foundations on the Masonic precepts: "Be good; be just; be indulgent; be kind; be grateful; be modest; pardon injuries; render good for evil; be forbearing and temperate; be a citizen; defend thy country with thy life."

Guided by these precepts, President Garfield achieved his greatness. His mind was, indeed, powerful and capacious, but it was the genuine kindness of his heart, his deep sympathy with mankind, his instinctive fellowship with sincerity, which gave him his intellectual enthusiasm and his mental force. His impulses were great, earnest, simple, unostentatious. His youthful ambition was guided by purity of purpose and by substantial, dignified, worthy desires. Born in the humblest station in life, he began early to bear his share of the burdens which rested upon his lowly home. His is the old story of devotion to his mother, self-sacrifice for his family, love of books, a religious sentiment and faith, serious determination, cheerful and untiring effort, abounding sense, which have marked so many of the sons of that hardy and devoted race whose Puritan defiance established, and whose Puritan faith inspired, the institutions under which we live, and which have characterized so many of those who in our own land have reached high distinction.

The first of his name in this country led a life of hard toil and rigid economy, was a brave soldier and a reliable civilian, and, through all the generations which lie between him and his illustrious descendant, his sturdy virtues have been preserved, never enervated by undue prosperity nor quenched by severe adversity. Down all those years there was

a steady flow of American manliness. Was there a popular demand for rights and a popular protest against wrongs, the voice of a Garfield was heard in the colonial multitude. Was there a stand against oppression and tyranny, the musket of a Garfield blazed in the line of the patriotic soldiery. Was there a frontier enterprise organized for the extension of civilization, the strong arm of a Garfield wielded his axe and the strong will of a Garfield gave courage to his companions in the bold and adventurous work. Not as high commanders, not clothed with supreme authority, not controlling great possessions, but as faithful and resolute workers in every civil organization and every material effort, this family performed its constant and valuable service. The faculties which made them useful in the early days of the Republic made their great son powerful in our own. And so purely and entirely were these faculties preserved that had the course of the years been reversed, and he whom the world now mourns had been born to the trials and duties of his first ancestor on these shores, he would have been the same colonial Puritan, soldier, citizen, magistrate. Possessed of his ancestral virtues and powers in all their force and vigor, he endured with courage and fortitude the privations of a frontier life. He reached out for every means of education. He clung with undying affection to those who shared his humble home. He knew no discouragement and was never disheartened by obstacles in the path which he pursued, not because it led to glory, but because it was his path of duty. The valor displayed by his ancestor at Concord he displayed at Chickamauga. The patience which enabled his fathers to endure the hardships of the log cabin in New England, enabled him, at a later day, to endure the hardships of a log cabin in the newly settled and half explored Ohio. The manly independence which lifted them above the accidents of life, and filled their humble dwellings with the beauty of high mental and moral qualities, and the more radiant beauty of religious faith, gave him that superiority which is everywhere felt, and which is never secured by the favors of fortune. We have produced many great men in the two centuries and a half which have passed away since our fathers landed on these shores—in the century which marks the age of our Republic—many families whose lives have been illustrious; but to Garfield alone of them all was it given to apply to the highest service of his country the strong qualities which had marked his ancestors through many manly, though inconspicuous generations. It was, undoubtedly, a consciousness of this which gave him his entire simplicity in all his greatness; for he was the simplest as well as one of the greatest of all our great men. Through all the remarkable experiences of his life, through all his official distinction, and all the brilliancy of state to which he rose, he never forgot the charms of his youthful days. There was always a warm place in his heart for the school-house built on land given by his mother, and for his first teacher, "a young

man from New Hampshire." No authors, however great, ever displaced his early friends, Weems and Grimshaw. No books, however profound, ever drew his affection away from "Robinson Crusoe" and "Alonzo and Melissa." His experience in the shop of the carpenter and along the tow-path of the canal, through all his life had a halo about it as an earnest labor, not for himself alone, but for those he loved. His life in the first school he attended, in the first school he taught, in his preparation for college, in his course at Hiram, had a touching side to it, not on account of his poverty alone, for most of his companions were as poor as he, but from the sincerity and earnestness of his purpose, from his religious confidence, from his forgetfulness of all comforts, and even necessities, before the imperious demands of his powerful mind, from his entire faith in the two declared objects of his college:—1. "To provide a sound, scientific and literary education, and 2. To temper and sweeten such education with moral and scriptural knowledge."

Moulded by these influences, his mind rose superior to external wants and received a guiding force which led to great mental power and accomplishment, and gave a sacred value to the circumstances about him. Into all this work his heart entered so deeply that its incidents were never forgotten. Its influence was never lost. Balancing in his mind which college to choose for the completion of his collegiate education, he selected Williams, because President Hopkins wrote to him, "If you come here we shall be glad to do what we can for you," a sentence which he said "seems to be a kind of friendly grasp of the hand;" and as he entered upon his studies, with "an open, kindly and thoughtful face, which showed no traces of his long struggle with poverty and privation," marching triumphantly through the classics and modern languages, he became the representative of everything gentle, generous, noble, genuine, and was, as President Hopkins tells us, "prompt, frank, manly, social in his tendencies," his great mind guiding and his great heart sympathizing with all the best tastes and social customs of the students and those about him. "To my mind," said he, "the whole catalogue of fashionable friendships and polite intimacies is not worth one honest tear of sympathy or one heartfelt emotion of true friendship." Over all his early life, especially over all his educational period, he stretched such a heaven of sincerity and love that to his dying day it was the great object of his dearest remembrance, the source of his strongest impulses, the sweet influence which tempered his whole being. For all this, he had a deep sentiment, whose purity and simplicity were undying. To his classmates who met him on the evening before his inauguration, he said: "To me there is something exceedingly pathetic in this reunion. In every eye before me I see the light of friendship and love, and I am sure it is reflected back to each one of you from my inmost heart." No official grandeur, no political success ever outshone the

strong and heavenly light which broke upon his youth and early manhood. The companions of his days of toil and trial were never forgotten. That habit of simplicity which made him essentially a social being led him to adhere with vital tenacity to those who stood by him in his labors. "Remember me kindly to the old house," said he to a friend and legislative companion who saw him the day after he was shot, and his warm heart rallied all his stricken powers to send forth the kindly message from that bed of agony and death. I could see the memories of his old rural home and occupation, and of his fields at Mentor, warming his words as he expressed to me the deep interest he felt in the department to which he called me, and his earnest desire for its prosperity and development.

Against the simplicity of his religious faith, into which he was baptised in his youth, and which he advocated with great fervor and eloquence in his early manhood, neither the well defined dogmas of the college nor the attractive customs of the Capital could ever prevail. It seemed as if the spirit of Garfield's youth never forsook him. Even hardship and trial could not bedim those bright plains which he had clothed in the sunlight of his own radiant nature.

"I've wandered East; I've wandered West,
Through many a weary day;
But never, never can forget
The love of life's young day."

It was this spirit that made him so dear to all people, and which enabled him so to set aside the conventionalities of life, even on the most stately occasions, that the sweetest humanity warmed toward him, and thanked God that he was a son, a husband and a father, as well as a soldier and statesman.

The public life of President Garfield extended over one of the most remarkable periods of our history—second, perhaps, not even to the great period of the Revolutionary war. He commenced his career in 1856 as a young orator in a cause which was arresting the attention of the profoundest thinkers in the country, and which resulted in one of the great social and civil changes of modern times. As a member of the Ohio Senate he won at once a high reputation for his fearless advocacy; for "that simple, affectionate way which charms people;" for his strong devotion to the educational work of his State, and for his studious preparation for the legislative debate, in which he was always ready to take a part. He was distinguished then, as he was through life, and on that larger legislative field where he exerted so much influence and won so great renown, for his discriminating judgment even in an hour of intense passion, and for his courtesy even in the most heated debate. The power of his argument was recognized by all who heard him; and his skillful ardent and sententious statements gave him great influence as a legislator and rising statesman. His influence on those about him was immense.

As the crash of war came, his counsel was broad, energetic, comprehensive; his action was prompt, vigorous and effective. There were those, it is true, who sprang to the front more nimbly than he, but there was no one who from the first moment rendered his state and his country more devoted service. To his mind his own interests were always secondary. Only after the most profound and religious consideration of his fitness and capacity did he accept the command offered him, and only after the most diligent and studious preparation did he undertake the duties which devolved upon him. From December 14, 1861, when he enterd the field with his regiment, to December 5, 1863, when he resigned his commission as major-general, he displayed all the qualities of vigilance, courage and rapidity of execution which mark the successful soldier and the philosophical judgment which marks the successful civilian. In his service in the Army, it was said of him: "The bent of his mind was aggressive; his judgment in military matters was always good. His papers on the Tullahoma campaign will stand a monument of his courage and his far-reaching soldierly sagacity, and his conduct at Chickamauga will never be forgotton by a nation of brave men."

When General Garfield left the Army and took his place on the floor of Congress as a Representative from the State of Ohio, he entered upon as remarkable a legislative career as has ever been recorded in our history. I cannot discuss here the measures in the consideration and passage of which he performed an important part. Nor is that necessary. But we must remember that during the seventeen years of his service as a member of the House our country passed through the closing years of war, and arrived at a solution of nearly every important question involved in the adjustments of peace. In this long career as a legislator, which constitutes General Garfield's important civil service, until he was elected President, we shall find the same intellectual fervor, the same conscientious desire for equal and exact justice, the same comprehensive judgment and the same confidence in a cultivated and educated popular sense as had marked his early career in an humbler sphere. As a member of the Committee on Military Affairs and of the Committee on Ways and Means he did invaluable service. In the debates in the House on all important questions he took a foremost part. There are recorded of him no sharp and bitter altercations, none of those brilliant passages at arms which excite and fascinate, but he appears always as the eloquent advocate of sound and manly and liberal views, and of those doctrines upon which he honestly believed the honor and safety of the country should rest. Now that he has gone from among us, is there anyone who would ask that his views might be modified, or who does not admire the earnestness and power and foresight with which he took his stand and presented his opinions? His views upon the restoration of the States, upon the public debt and specie payments, upon the

National Bureau of Education, on the right to originate revenue bills, on the civil and military power of the Government, on the tariff, have now passed into history. On many of these questions the result is finally determined. Of others the solution is steadily working out in the hands of a united, industrious, educated, prosperous people. Is there a man among us who does not recognize the wisdom and fairness of him who has left his words for our councils and his great life for our guidance? Is there an opponent even who does not appreciate the motives and admire the consistency which marked his career from the day when he entered the Senate of Ohio to the close of his career as a member of the Federal Congress? He has left behind him many a generous sentiment, many a humane doctrine, many a sound utterance upon which this country can advance to entire fraternity of feeling, and to still further progress in popular education and national prosperity.

Of his manner in debate there are those of us who can never forget his commanding presence in the House. As the discussion of important questions went on, it is indeed true of him that

> "With grave
> Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
> A pillar of state."

His manifest sincerity, his evident preparation, his earnest manner, his strong and fervid diction arrested the attention of all who were within the sound of his powerful voice, modulated at times on the tones of the most solemn exhortation.

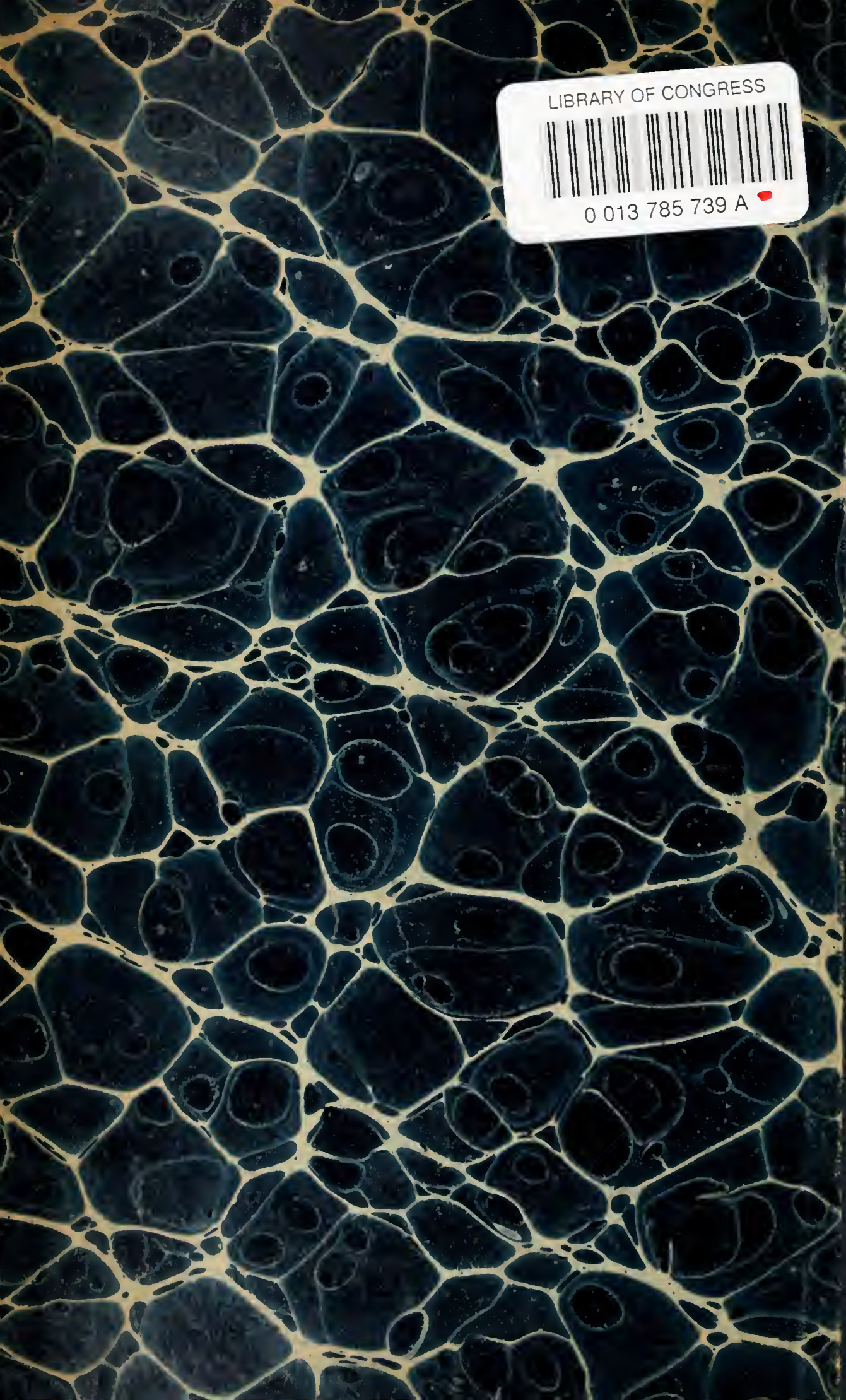
And now, brethren, when we survey the qualities of mind and heart which characterized our illustrious brother, and which I have hastily portrayed for your respect and admiration, how can we wonder for a moment at the deep and earnest sympathy manifested for him and his people at the tragic closing of his great life? The popular feeling throughout the world was moved for him whose heart beat always in unison with the popular heart. Every mother felt the agony of her who saw the son upon whom she had so long learned to lean confidently for support in her old age, the son of her pride and love, slowly and painfully passing away. The heart of every wife wept for her who bravely bore her sorrow as the weary hours passed by which were bearing the noble object of her life-long love, the companion of all her years of toil, beyond the great consummation of his life in this world to the greater and more glorious consummation of the life which is to come. Suddenly this human existence, which I have endeavored to describe to you, became conspicuous, and so clear and radiant was it in its conspicuity, that day by day during the long and weary summer, men everywhere learned patience and courage and heroism of him, were taught the simplicity and grandeur of a truly great life, shared his agony, prayed for his re-

covery, and, as they rose each day to gather new hope and assurance, said one to another, surely this great man .

> Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
> So clear in his great office, that his virtues
> Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
> The deep damnation of his taking-off.

I need not remind you that in all his life he accepted the emblems of our order, significant of deep religion, high morality and well organized and well rewarded toil—of faithful labor and just compensation—of strength of purpose, rectitude, equality, brotherly love—the keystone of the arch, the plumb, the level, the trowel—the pot of incense as the emblem of a pure heart. As we plant the rosemary and the cassia on his grave, we may thank God for the rich record he has given us, and for the example he has left to all who would serve their country faithfully and bravely, and in accordance with the best doctrines upon which the American people can develop and perpetuate the Government bequeathed to them by the fathers.

LB JL '05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